

CHARITY SUPERIOR TO KNOWLEDGE.

A Discourse

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CHARITY SUPERIOR TO KNOWLEDGE.

“And though I.....understand all mysteries, and all knowledge,..... and have not charity, I am nothing.”—1 Cor. xiii. 2.

It was by no means the intention of the apostle, nor is it ours, to depreciate an understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, any more than to underrate great attainments in philology, the gift of prophecy, miracle-working faith, almsgiving, beneficence, or the martyr's devotion and fortitude. These, each and all, considered in reference to the purposes they are respectively fitted to accomplish, are of great value; and, so far as they are attainable, should excite the aspirations of every ingenuous bosom, and prompt to the most strenuous exertions for their acquisition. In particular, we would, on this occasion, urge the high claims which an understanding of the mysteries and knowledge which lie within the range of our capacity has upon our solicitude and earnest endeavor to secure it. Without such an understanding, our dignity, our usefulness, and our happiness will be restrained within limits contracted in proportion to our defalcation in this particular. It is not denied that, with very inferior attainments in this understanding, a man whose moral feelings are rightly directed may be respectable, useful, and happy; but we do not scruple to say, that he whose heart is right will possess a capacity for respectability, usefulness, and happiness, in the direct ratio in which his understanding is cultivated and expanded.

The apostle's object was, and it is also ours, to exhibit the very superior advantage of moral excellence over excellence in any other accomplishment—especially in that resulting from the most extended intellectual improvement. The sum of

moral excellence is expressed by the term charity. And so greatly more important does the apostle deem it that man should have charity than that he should understand all mysteries and all knowledge, that he considers those who boast the latter distinction, but are destitute of the former accomplishment, as nothing—deserving no estimation. To suppose man to understand *all* mysteries and *all* knowledge, is to put the case of intellectual acquisition in the extreme,—a supposition never yet realized even in case of the wisest and most learned among men. And if, without charity, he would be nothing who should understand all mysteries and all knowledge, what shall be said of those who arrogate much distinction to themselves for a very limited acquaintance with both the one and the other of these objects of intellectual investigation, while they not only have not charity, but consider any attention to its claims wholly beneath them? Are they not “less than nothing, and vanity?” In treating the subject, we shall speak,

- I. Of understanding all mysteries and all knowledge;
- II. Of having charity; and,
- III. Of the apostle's meaning, when he declares that “though he did understand all mysteries and all knowledge, if he did not have charity, he would be nothing.”

I. In pursuance of the above plan, we are to speak, in the first place, of understanding all mysteries and all knowledge. To understand, is to have a just conception of the subject of which the term is predicated. It is to comprehend its entire nature, with all its relations. It does not import merely to conjecture shrewdly, or to reason logically upon the subject, but to perceive distinctly its exact character. How little is understood by even the most intelligent of mankind! How much, of almost all subjects of human speculation, lies beyond the clear ken of the most perspicacious investigator, or eludes altogether the most diligent and searching scrutiny of the most pertinacious inquirer!

It is probable, we suppose, that the apostle had in view especially those conventional mysteries which excited so much interest among the learned and the wise, particularly the Egyptian, the Jewish, and the Grecian mysteries. To understand these was, in the several countries where they set up their claims, a point of the most fervent ambition, and a mat-

ter of the most exultant glorying, on the part of men of the most distinguished intellectual ability. Initiation into these mysteries was deemed a privilege of vast importance. Men travelled far, submitted to many painful privations, and persevered long in the most arduous mental toil, that they might secure the advantages and the honor of such an initiation. Into the Grecian or Eleusinian mysteries, none were permitted to be initiated but citizens of Athens; and so important was the privilege of initiation considered, that men who, after their deaths, were regarded as demigods, submitted to become the adopted citizens of that city, that they might be admitted to an inferior degree in that initiation; for to the highest none but *native* Athenians might be admitted. Restraining the apostle's supposition to these mysteries, how strong even then the case which he puts! To understand all that is wrapped up in the sacred hieroglyphics of Egypt, in the signs and symbols of initiation into her mysteries, and those of Ceres at Eleusis, and to comprehend the cabala of the Jews, the treasured dicta of her long lines of sages, scribes, and doctors, would certainly, on ordinary principles of estimation, argue that a man was *something*—something distinguished much above the common intellectual standard. But we need not, nor would we be authorized thus to limit the apostle's supposition. Mysteries that excite the most restless curiosity, are found apart from these conventional and systematized enigmas. There is, indeed, no department of human inquiry in which mysteries do not abound. For instance, what law of nature is not a mystery, whether regarded abstractly or in its mode of operation? Who can tell the nature of attraction, or the means by which it operates its stupendous ministrations in the harmony of the solar system, and, probably, of the physical universe? What philosopher but will admit that there are mysteries which he has not been able to penetrate? What school of philosophy teaches the true doctrine in regard to the perception of objects external to the mind which perceives them? What physiologist pretends even to trace the connection between a volition of the mind, through the nerves, with the muscles, whereby an action, corresponding to the determination of the mind, is instantaneously produced? Much may be learnedly said upon these subjects; but it all amounts to no more than that the nerves and muscles are the

instruments by which the mind accomplishes its purposes. This mystery has its source in one still darker—the influence of spirit upon matter. Who was ever able to detect the points of contact between natures so dissimilar as spirit and matter? The fact of reciprocal influence, on the part of these dissimilar natures, is universally admitted by those who do not deny the existence of the spiritual nature; but *how* the one influences the other, who can even conjecture? And, admitting that there is no spiritual nature involved in the question, is the mystery any the less? Who can even conceive of matter as endued with thought, sensibility, and conscience? While volition, to be what its very name imports, must be free, that is, independent of all control, such is the influence that motive-causes exert upon its determinations, that many philosophers have concluded that those determinations *must be* the result of such influence. This conclusion, being utterly incongruous with the nature of volition, and utterly inconsistent with the moral accountability of man, must be rejected. But who can show, upon a simple analysis of mental phenomena, that it ought to be rejected? Beattie, in his “Essay on Truth,” affirmed that “every man knew it to be false, but that no man could prove it to be so.” Religion abounds in mysteries of the profoundest kind. Think of God, as “the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever;” as everywhere present at every moment; as seeing all that is in the entire universe; as “seeing the end from the beginning,” and yet leaving *contingent* the conduct of moral agents. Think of him as *originating* matter, not giving it form merely; so that where nothing was, the material universe came into being, which he fashioned, according to the counsel of his own will, into the infinitely various shapes in which it is now beholden with wonder and admiration. After allowing the existence of these and innumerable other mysteries, in the Divine nature and works, which certainly are almost universally admitted to exist, shall we reject the mystery of the Trinity in Unity in the Godhead—a doctrine clearly revealed—only because we cannot comprehend it? Shall we stumble at the mystery of the Divine incarnation, in the person of Jesus Christ, only because it is a mystery which we cannot understand? This were as unphilosophical as it would be profane. Many more mysteries might be specified, as

within the scope of the apostle's supposition; but it is believed that these are enough to show the very high estimation in which he held that charity, without which he would have regarded himself as nothing, though he understood all these mysteries—not understood merely the existence of the facts which they affirmed, but the entire nature of those facts. For the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, for instance, is not understood by a mere knowledge that the Godhead *thus* exists—the *mode* of such existence is what constitutes the mystery; and, therefore, to understand the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, implies an understanding of the mode of such an existence. And so of all other mysteries: to understand them is to have an adequate conception of their whole nature, and of all that appertains to them.

All knowledge embraces every department of human inquiry in which certainty is attainable. Certainty is of two kinds—*moral*, and *mathematical* or *absolute*. The former rests upon testimony—the latter is either self-evident or the result of demonstration. These different kinds of certainty are equally satisfactory to the mind, and equally adapted to the purposes they are respectively intended and calculated to accomplish. The knowledge which rests on testimony, or moral certainty, is far more extensive than that certainty or knowledge which results from demonstration or is self-evident. It embraces, strictly speaking, all that is learned, whether under the teaching of others or in the exercise of our own faculties. It regards almost all we know of the earth and the heavens; of the various inhabitants of the earth, their natures, their habitudes, and their history; of providence, its bounties and its chastisements; of religion, its doctrines, its precepts, and its announcements. Exceedingly cursory must be our survey of this immense and various field. Of the structure of the earth, geology can boast but a very superficial knowledge—too limited, altogether, to warrant the presumptuous theories concerning its formation and its age which have been erected upon it. Scarcely have the profoundest explorers of its secrets been able to penetrate the mere rind of this massive globe. How absurd, then, to pretend such a knowledge as would warrant the establishment of such theories! Much, however, that is useful and important, is and may be known concerning the structure of the earth. Much more still may be known in

regard to its surface. By the pencil of geography, her seas, her lakes, and her rivers, her continents, her islands, her mountains, and her plains, her empires, her kingdoms, her republics, and her cities, are mapped and spread out before the eye of the inquirer; so that, without leaving his study, he may survey the face of the globe, with an accuracy and to an extent adequate to all purposes of ordinary interest. Botany has investigated and arranged the various vegetables which spring from the different soils and in the different climates of the earth, for its adornment and for the nourishment and the health of the animals which inhabit it; so that there is scarcely a leaf that trembles in the breeze, a flower that spreads its beauty to the sun, or a seed that has been matured by the influence of the seasons, which is not known to have been provided by Infinite Wisdom and Goodness either to relieve the sufferings of sentient beings or to minister to them sustenance and comfort. Zoölogy, in its various departments, has, in great measure, accomplished what Adam performed by intuitive wisdom or Divine inspiration, when he gave names to the various tribes of animals, so appropriate that those names not only continued to designate them, but, as is generally supposed, to express their natures and their habits. From the reptile which the unassisted eye is unable to detect, to the dragon-like serpents of the African deserts—from the diminutive mouse to the unwieldy elephant—from the insect, fluttering her ephemeral hour in the summer breeze, to the mighty condor, perched upon the lofty crags of the Andes—from the animalcule, thousands of which find ample verge in a single drop of liquid, to the enormous whale, whose gambols disturb the northern seas—human science has made itself familiar with their natures, their propensities, and their habits; has warned man of the dangers to be apprehended, and instructed him as to the benefits to be derived to himself from them.

Astronomy has revealed much important information concerning the heavens. Knowledge on this subject is partly derived from testimony, and is partly the result of demonstration. Phenomena have been collected by various observers and at various times and places. These phenomena have been made the bases of mathematical calculation; the results of which have been certain knowledge. Thus have the fixed stars and the planetary bodies been accurately distinguished

from each other; and the superficies of the latter, their weights, distances from each other and from the sun, their periods of revolution, both annual and diurnal, and the extent and figure of their several orbits, ascertained, with so much accuracy as to enable those versed in the science to determine the positions they will respectively occupy at any given future moment. Nay, so exact is the knowledge attained on this sublime subject, that Le Verrier was able to determine that there was a planet which never had been observed, and in what part of the heavens its position was to be found. Such a result could have been reached only by means of a minute acquaintance with the circumstances of the planetary bodies, and the influences those circumstances exert, and by an exact calculation of these influences. Thus was discovered the necessity for the existence of such a planet as was afterwards found existing in the precise position indicated by the astronomer. Not only can astronomy trace out the path and indicate the speed of these regular navigators, which sail in the *trade-winds* of the heavens, but she can also follow the eccentric ramblings of the untamed comet, as he sails through the mazes of celestial archipelagoes which his destiny compels him to thread in his devious course; so that, centuries in advance of his advent, the moment of his appearance and the point at which his progress will become visible are definitely declared by astronomical science. How stupendous such knowledge! How calculated to "raise man o'er man"—to "puff up" the unsanctified heart! How naturally do those who possess such knowledge glory in the distinction it confers upon them! Can they be convinced that they are what the apostle affirms that he, *without charity*, would be—NOTHING?

But there is a knowledge far more important to man than that which regards either the earth and its inferior inhabitants, or the heavens, in all their magnificence—the *knowledge of mankind*. This is a subject so vast and so various that it is impossible, in a brief discourse, to do more than to bestow upon it a mere glance. A lifetime devoted to the acquisition of this knowledge would leave much, that might be known, unattained; and volumes would be required to serve as the repositories of it, when collected together under the most concentrated forms of which it is susceptible.

As a mere animal, man is a study of great interest. No superior specimen of mechanism is anywhere to be found, if any equal to it be in existence. In the forms and articulations of the bones and the cartilages; in the employment and arrangement of the muscles and the tendons; in the functions and disposition of the glands and other secretory organs; in short, in the whole construction of the animal frame, there is displayed the most intimate acquaintance with mechanical powers—the most felicitous combination of those powers for obtaining the result contemplated, and the utmost economy, both in regard to the powers employed, and to the space in which they are to operate. Ease, efficiency, and harmony, characterize the operations of this machine in all its natural movements. Hundreds of *levers* simultaneously combine their forces to perform a given action; thousands of cords, crossing each other at every imaginable angle, draw towards the same result; yet in all this multiplicity and complexity of movement there is no jostle, no entanglement. All is so nicely adjusted, that the movement is as smooth and unembarrassed as if the mechanism were of the simplest possible construction.

Then, again, in man, as an animal, we see the distribution of a fluid throughout the whole frame, which serves the double purpose of impelling the mechanical powers to the required action, and of giving the promptest notice of any derangement of the machine, or the presence of any insurmountable or even hurtful obstruction to its operation. Of course, we allude to the nervous fluid; which, whatever it be, pervades the whole animal frame, and is everywhere the medium of sensation and the excitant to action. We also see ample provision for the conservation of the machine, and for the repair of the damages to which it is liable from the friction of its parts in motion, or from the action of external causes. This provision is found in the respiratory, digestive, and circulating processes. Daily, hourly, nay, every moment are these processes going on; and for many years together they are able to continue the machine in constant motion, without abatement of vigor, and, much of the time, with daily increasing energy.

But man, as an animal, is more than a mere machine. Nay, his mechanical value is wholly dependent on the presence of a

principle altogether different from and superior to any mechanical power or any combination of such powers—LIFE. The existence of this principle and many of its phenomena may be and are known; though its nature is among the mysteries that have never yet been penetrated by the eagle-eye of science. It is even probable that only He who is the Author of life *can* understand its nature. But the supposition in our text goes even to the extent of understanding this, among other mysteries. The Scriptures, indeed, say that “the blood is the life.” But we suppose that by this it is intended only that the blood is the chief instrument of maintaining and perpetuating life. That it is such, all who know any thing of the matter will allow. By means of the rapid and constant circulation of this fluid throughout all parts of the system, heat and nourishment, essential to life and its continuance, are distributed to all parts. But the blood, though the pabulum of life, is not itself life; as we see it, when withdrawn from circulation in the living animal, as destitute of all the attributes of life as is any other material substance whatever. It were hard to set limits to the discoveries of human research; but we greatly doubt the possibility of its ever attaining to the knowledge of what is life. Anatomy and physiology have collected vast treasures of knowledge with regard to the animal nature of man; and yet much remains unknown, or at least very imperfectly understood, by those even who are most eminently proficient in these departments of science. The supposition we are considering is, that all in relation to them is not only known but thoroughly understood. How vast, how interesting, how valuable such knowledge would be considered, we need not say.

The common opinion of mankind, in all ages and everywhere, has ascribed to man a compound nature, material and spiritual. A few profoundly metaphysical inquirers, who are never in their element but when they are in opposition to common opinion, have labored earnestly to repudiate the existence of spirit, as an essentially distinct component part of human nature. True, there are phenomena, in the operations of that nature, utterly incongruous with every received definition of matter, to all that is known of its qualities and capabilities; yet who knows but that matter, refined to the last degree and in some of its innumerable combinations, may

be capable of consciousness, sensation, reason, and moral agency? Yes: who knows? Not he, most certainly, who, rejecting the sober dictates of experience, reason, and revelation, follows the illusory guidance of a presumptuous philosophy, which, by close reasoning, upon very plausible data, can bring into question the existence of both matter and spirit, and prove that the whole universe is nothing more than a vast assemblage of ideas or images, drawn upon no canvas and reflecting no substantial existence. Such a one cannot know that matter, in no form or possible combination, can be capable of these functions. But it will be long, we presume, ere the popular mind can be imbued with a doubt in regard to a spiritual nature in man; that is, a nature distinct from and superior to his material frame. To this higher nature are attributed consciousness, sensation, reflection, reason, memory, and conscience, and a host of passions, to serve as springs of action, under the guidance of the intellectual faculties, together with a will, or power of self-determination, whereby a choice of course, among those indicated by the intellectual faculties and urged by the passions, may be freely and responsibly made. Whether the attribution of these to a spiritual nature in man be or be not just, it is, at any rate, certain that they exist in man; and the knowledge of them, it must be allowed, is an important branch of the science of human nature. Of these we must say a few words.

Consciousness, being restrained to what concerns the proper existence and the internal experience of the individual of whom it is predicated, ought first to be considered. By means of this faculty, the mind recognizes its own existence, and takes account of the various operations of its own faculties. It is cognizant of all that passes in the mind, though it is concealed from all else but the Omniscient, and, perhaps, other purely spiritual beings who are present at the moment of its passing. Consciousness is the great registrar of all our thoughts and our feelings, our hopes and our fears, our joys and our sorrows, our plans and our purposes. By this faculty they are collected, ascertained, and handed over to memory—the annals of our internal economy.

As consciousness takes account of all within man, so sensation apprises him of matters without himself. The senses are the media through which external objects communicate a

knowledge of themselves to the mind, by means of sensation ; and they are the only channels of such communication. If, as some philosophers affirm, they are unreliable, then the acquaintance of man with matters external to himself is utterly hopeless. If the information communicated by them in regard to these matters be false, there can be no corrective of the error they have propagated. But do these philosophers charge the senses justly with reporting falsely of the external world? We apprehend not. One of the senses may report a matter imperfectly ; and if the mind bases on this imperfect report an opinion in regard to the subject of that report in all its bearings, error will most probably be the result. Whereas, if the mind suspend its judgment, till other senses which have cognizance of the subject in question have rendered in their collateral report, error will be avoided, and the senses will be seen to be faithful reporters of the objects without the mind. Thus, when the sense of sight shall report of a tree, it can report only of the outline ; and, for aught that lies within its competency, the tree may be a perfect plane, with a breadth equal to its actual diameter, and may be in immediate juxtaposition with the organ of vision ; but when the subject shall have been examined and reported on by the sense of feeling, the tree will be found to be cylindrical, and to be at a distance from the eye. Many experiences of this kind will enable the mind to decide, on the report of one only of the coöacting senses, upon the true character of the object reported of. These remarks will, we think, be found to hold good in all cases where one of the senses, while in a healthful state, reports imperfectly of any matter. The correction, or, rather, the completion of the report will be found in some other sense, or in some other of the senses. Hence, though it is reason which ascertains the truth in regard to external objects, she does not do so by supplying the defects or by correcting the errors which exist in the reports of the senses, but by comparing those reports, and by supplying the defects in the reports of one sense from the reports of another sense or other senses upon the same subject. We conclude that the senses are worthy of entire confidence.

Consciousness and sensation furnish all the materials upon which the mind employs its energies in treasuring up know-

ledge. Upon these it reflects. It compares, combines, and analyzes them. One sensation is compared with another; and their agreement with or incongruity to each other is noted. Two things, alike in generic character, are compared, with reference to a specific quality, and a conclusion is drawn from their agreement that they belong to the same category. This is reasoning. Thus: "All animals having four feet and no more, are quadrupeds; but a horse is an animal which has four feet and no more; therefore, a horse is a quadruped." This is a familiar, say a homely instance; yet it embraces the whole scope of reasoning, in whatever form it may be presented. If the agreement is wanting, the conclusion is reversed. Mathematical reasoning proceeds upon exactly the same plan. Thus: "Things equal to the same thing are equal to one another; but," etc. And so, in all reasoning, a comparison of the known qualities of a partially known subject with the known qualities of a subject already well known, and conclusions drawn from their agreement or disagreement, are the entire process.

Sensations often repeated and carefully observed, enable the mind to determine the qualities of matter, and the laws to which it is subject, at least so far as is necessary to the purposes of physical science. Figure, or form, is seen to belong to matter, when existing in sufficient accumulation to be cognizable by senses so gross as those of man. *Extension* belongs to it, in its minutest form of existence; as no one can conceive of two particles of matter, how minute soever they may be, occupying the same space at the same time; and form belongs essentially to extension. Gravity, or weight, is also an indispensable quality of matter; as all will at once feel the absurdity of supposing the union of two particles of matter, without greater weight in the united particles than belongs to either separately. The absence of locomotive power belongs so essentially to matter, that, whenever it is in motion, the question naturally arises, in the mind of the observer, "What has put it in motion?" or, if the motion cease, "What has caused it to cease its motion?" No teaching of philosophy concerning the *vis inertia* of matter is necessary to the origination of these questions: they spring spontaneously in the minds of even children, so clearly is it perceived that locomotive power

does not belong to matter. Many other qualities of matter are discovered to the mind through the medium of the senses—heat, hardness, color, odor, sapidity, sonorousness, etc.

Now, philosophers, with all imaginable gravity, tell us that these terms express sensations in the mind, and that nothing resembling such sensations exists in matter; and they make a vast parade of their metaphysical acuteness and accuracy, in the important discovery—as if any sane man ever imagined that there was a sensation of heat in the fire; of hardness in the flint; of green, blue, red, or other color in the colored matter; of a pleasant odor in the rose, or an unpleasant one in the ointment of the apothecary, in which dead flies were engulfed; of sweetness in sugar, or of bitterness in gall; of melody in Jenny Lind's singing, or of discord in the sounds made by a sheet-iron band! Are we to infer that there are no qualities in material bodies which excite these sensations in the mind? Or does philosophy descend from its dignity, to quarrel with the names given to those qualities, simply because they are identical with the names of the sensations excited by them? We hold that this is mere logomachy—especially, as the philosophers themselves will as readily speak of the heat of the fire, the sweetness of sugar, the odor of the rose, etc., as the most unscientific clown that stands agape at the profundity of their wisdom. All that science is concerned with, in the matter, is the existence of the qualities themselves, and to distinguish between the quality and the sensation excited by it—not to determine the name of either the one or the other.

By means of sensations, repeated, collated, and compared, man has made himself familiar with the laws of matter, so as, to a very great extent, to become master of arts, letters, and science. The mechanical powers have been so arranged and combined by him as not merely to serve his domestic purposes, but have, in connection with chemical agencies, enabled him to traverse the ocean in vessels of immense magnitude, drawn through the waves by a few yards of canvas properly disposed, or impelled by the steam, collected from boiling water, directed upon a machinery constructed for the purpose. He can ascend above the clouds, and sail sublimely, with the speed of the air-current upon which he is embarked, through the trackless and chartless regions of ether. He has embodied thought, and rendered it tangible, permanent, and transmissible; so

that the remotest ages of the past and the most distant regions of the earth contribute to the stock of each man's ideas. The humblest man who has learned letters is put into easy communication with the sages, prophets, and lettered monarchs of ages long past; and their wisdom and knowledge become his rightful inheritance, on his entering into possession of them. Friends, separated by the intervention of oceans and continents, interchange at brief intervals those assurances of continued affection so dear to the loving heart; while whatever is useful or curious, in one hemisphere, is soon made known to those who read, in another. Nay, by means of the electric telegraph, thoughts are communicated with a speed which shows the earth a laggard in her diurnal revolution; so that a fashionable lady of New York, after having dressed herself *à la mode* in the morning, may instruct her gossip in New Orleans in all the minutiae of morning dress, in sufficient time for the latter to make her toilet, without meriting the character of a sluggard. The daguerrean artist, without pallet, brush, or paint, secures a *likeness* of the subject he wishes to represent, by simply directing the light of heaven upon it, and reflecting that light upon the plate he has prepared to bear the image sought to be perpetuated. The mathematician, seated in his study, can gauge the dimensions, ascertain the weight, measure the distance, and calculate the speed of bodies much larger than that on whose surface he is an almost indistinguishable speck, and whose distances from the earth are so great that they can scarcely be seen by the unassisted eye of man.

By means of consciousness and sensation, man can, to a great extent, understand his own intellectual and moral nature—the laws of mental operation. True it is that here, more than anywhere else, the perspicacity of man is often at fault. This, we are satisfied, is chiefly, if not solely, the result of a vain attempt to reduce mental operations under the dominion of physical laws, or, at least, of laws similar to those which regulate physical operations. Thus, metaphysicians seem to conceive the intervention of ideas necessary to the perception of objects external to the mind, because matter can act upon matter only by contact. Again, the constraining influence of motives, in order to volition, is deemed necessary, because matter can be put in motion only by an impulse from

without itself, and can only act according to the momentum of that impulse. Still, notwithstanding this peculiar tendency to err in regard to his own intellectual nature, man has attained to a vast amount of valuable knowledge upon this very interesting subject. He has, in a good degree, ascertained the limits within which the mind may expatiate, without necessarily wandering into the mazes of error; and he knows that those limits define a field at once ample, various, and rich in its returns to the diligent explorer.

But, besides physical and mental faculties, man has moral powers, which, more than all else, elevate him in the scale of being. He only, we believe, of all mundane creatures, has any moral or religious sense or perception; while he possesses it to an extent adequate to all the duties, of both religion and morality, which can be predicated of a being constituted as he is, and sustaining the relations in which he is found placed. Strictly speaking, religion regards our duties to God, and morality those which are due from man to man and to other creatures, within the scope of his influence. The sum of religion is devotion of mind, heart, and life to the will of God. The sum of morality is justice, truth, and kindness towards all within the range of our influence, whether men or inferior sentient creatures. By the teachings of revelation, man can be made to know these duties, both as it respects their general spirit, and in the details appropriate to the various relations in which he may be placed. Moreover, in both religion and morals is included the certain assurance of rewards or punishments, accordingly as duty has been performed or neglected; and the scene of both the one and the other is laid in another state of being—subsequent to death, unmixed, changeless, and eternal. Thus, man, considered in regard to his physical structure, his mysterious vitality, his apprehensive organs, his mental powers, his moral relations and responsibilities, and his coming, eternal, retributive destiny, is a subject of most interesting investigation; and a proper knowledge of him constitutes a mass of science vast, various, and of surpassing importance; and such a perfect knowledge of man is supposed in our text.

Man, in society, presents a vast field for the acquisition of important knowledge. That man was designed for society, is evident equally from his adaptedness to and his invincible pro-

pensity to enter into and continue in it. The all-wise Maker's averment in regard to him, "It is not good that the man should be alone," is impressed in ineffaceable characters on the constitution of man's nature. Society is either domestic or political; either consists of families, or associations of men, united upon conventional regulations; and much of the solicitude which has been felt by good men in all ages, has been to discover the regulations which would best secure the common weal of these societies. Government is indispensable to the well-being, nay, to the very existence of society in any form or of any magnitude; and the great question which has occupied the attention and exercised the talents of philanthropic sages has been, "In what mode may it be exercised with the least sacrifice of individual rights?" Such a sacrifice, to a greater or less extent, is inevitable, where any form of government exists. We, the people of the United States, believe that we have solved this important problem—with more success than any other people, at least—in the establishment of representative governments, controlled in their operations by written constitutions, which they may not change, and beyond whose limits their acts are destitute of all authority; and by rendering distinct and independent of each other, the legislative, executive, and judicial departments, and placing the military force of the society under the strictest control of all these departments. Be this as it may, the science of government is vastly important, and may well be considered as a part of that mass of knowledge supposed in our text to be understood. Nor this alone is understood, but a perfect knowledge of all that would conduce to the well-being of society in any of its forms of existence—in what manner, for instance, husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, rulers and subjects, should conduct themselves towards each other, so as to secure the greatest amount of felicity possible in these relations.

Finally, religion embodies an amount and a variety of knowledge well worthy the most earnest pursuit of the highest order of intellect; and some commentators on the Bible are inclined to limit the apostle's meaning, in our text, to the knowledge and mysteries in this most interesting department of human investigation. We have considered that meaning as of broader scope. However this may be, there can be no question that

the mysteries and knowledge proper to religion were prominently present to the mind of the apostle, and should be so to our minds, while we are endeavoring to understand the text. Religion treats of God; of the relation of man to Him, and of the duties and responsibilities arising from that relation. Three systems of religion have obtained currency among men—"natural, revealed, and eclectic."

Natural religion is that system of religion which has been formed by human reason, without any known assistance from Divine revelation. The basis of this system, under all its modifications, has always been, we believe, polytheism. We recollect no instance in which unassisted reason has attained to the sublime discovery that there is but ONE GOD. Socrates made as near an approach to this discovery as, perhaps, any other whose mind was not guided by the light of revelation; and yet one of the last acts of his life was to recognize the divinity of the healing god, Esculapius.

Revealed religion is that system which claims to have been communicated to man by Divine revelation. This system has for its basis the *unity* of the Divine nature. It has been presented before the world under two modifications, the Levitical and the Christian; the former imperfect and preparatory, and the latter perfect and permanent. They were circumstantially different, but essentially the same. These two systems—of natural and revealed religion—differed as widely in regard to the Divine character as they did with regard to the unity of the Divine nature. The gods of natural religion were subject to like *passions* and even addicted to like *VICES* with men. What distinguished them from men was chiefly, if not exclusively, simple amplification of faculties. They were only *indefinitely great* men. The God of revealed religion is wholly different: self-existent and independent, infinite in all his attributes, he is free from weakness, from passion, and from vice. Holiness is as properly an attribute of the God of revelation as is power or wisdom; and this holiness is an exact balance of all moral excellence, without any lack or excess in any quality.

Man's relation to the Divinity, and the duties and responsibilities growing out of that relation, were also strikingly dissimilar, in the showing of these two systems. We have no information that natural religion took any account of a

merely personal relation to God on the part of man. We know of no simply personal religious duties that it requires of man. Its whole scope seems to have been to subserve the interests of society. The heart might be corruption itself, the life might be degradation, without incurring the censure of natural religion. And the expiation of recognized faults was easy under that system. Hume, if a sincere votary of natural religion, spoke correctly, when he said he could feel at ease with the gods of this religion. On the contrary, revealed religion considers man's relation to God as chiefly personal—as extending to his whole being. He may serve or disobey God in thought as effectually as he can in the most important social act which he can perform; and his faults against his relation to the God of revealed religion are of such malignant turpitude, that they can be expiated only by an atonement of which unassisted reason never could have had the faintest conception. Connected with this atonement, as we conceive, the revelation was made of the trinity of Persons in the unity of the Godhead. We do not mean that this trinity of Persons was in any way dependent for its existence on the atonement for man's sin; but we do suppose that the revelation of the Trinity was made to man with special, perhaps exclusive reference to that atonement, and to the plan of salvation dependent on that atonement. We do not deem it necessary to be more particular in our notice of these two systems which have been embraced by men.

The *eclectic* system of religion is that which has derived, whether avowedly or not, some of its leading doctrines from revelation, but has not scrupled to reject, or, what amounts to the same thing, explain away such parts of revelation as do not commend themselves to their notions of fitness. German Rationalism, Anglo-Saxon Unitarianism, and Deism, we are compelled to rank together in this category. True, Deism discards revelation altogether, while Rationalism and Unitarianism profess submission to its authority; but is it not well known that the best parts of *Deism*—all truly good, indeed—are derived from the Bible; and that whatever portions of revelation are found inconsistent with their creeds, are so explained as to mean just the contrary of their obvious import, by both Rationalists and Unitarians? Is it not mani-

fest that both courses tend to precisely the same issue—with this difference, however, that that of the Rationalists and Unitarians, being less open, is more mischievous than that of the Deists? A knowledge of all these systems is supposed in our text; and, what is far more important, a knowledge of what is right and what is wrong in each of them: in other words, a correct knowledge of the true religion. Can this knowledge be overrated? Add to this, the understanding of all other mysteries and all other branches of knowledge, and we can form some idea of the apostle's supposition in our text. We proceed, now,

II. To show what is implied in *having charity*. No scriptural term, probably, has been more perverted from its proper signification than *charity*. It is sometimes used synonymously with almsgiving; and at other times its import is found in an indulgent construction of the conduct and motives of our fellow-men. Now, that neither of these applications of this term does it any thing like justice, will be at once apparent to any one who will read the chapter from which our text is taken. Both almsgiving and indulgent interpretations of our neighbor's character are, it is true, characteristics of charity; but, then, they are not charity, any more than are truth and justice *morality*. They belong to charity, as justice and truth belong to morality; but being only parts, they should not be allowed to arrogate the honor due to charity as a whole. The abuse of this term has, we fear, been very mischievous in its effects upon the ethics of many individuals and even communities. Satisfied with having addicted themselves to almsgiving, or to indulgent views with regard to their neighbor, they have laid "the flattering unction to their souls" that they have that charity to which St. Paul here ascribes such paramount importance, and which in other portions of Scripture is not less highly appreciated. What, then, is CHARITY? It is that disposition of the mind which will display itself in those various virtuous qualities which, in this thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are represented as characteristics of charity. Not that the delineation of charity is completed by these characteristics, but that they belong to it essentially. Charity has other and not less important features. The question, then, recurs, WHAT is charity? We answer, It is THE LOVE OF ALL MANKIND.

This will appear evident from the fact that all that the apostle here says of charity, is true of love, and that it is true of no other passion or state of the soul. This we shall proceed briefly to exemplify; and,

1. *Charity suffereth long, and is kind.* Long-suffering supposes protracted hardships or protracted provocations, proceeding from the party towards which it is exercised. It does not suppose indifference to such hardships or provocations: on the contrary, they are felt to the extent of *suffering* on account of them. Nor does it imply the absence of all well-directed effort to remove those hardships or provocations, or to lessen them, as far as practicable, if they may not be wholly removed. Long-suffering implies a patient endurance of its cause, whether hardship or provocation, though long-continued. See this often and strikingly exemplified in conjugal and parental affection. How patiently, and for how many years, does the wife or husband, whose hardships are occasioned by the improvidence or extravagance of the husband or wife beloved, endure a lot of incessant toil and of withering privation! See, too, the endurance of that wife or husband, under provocations from the evil habits, the disagreeable manners, or the perverse tempers of the collateral relative, which to all others seem utterly intolerable. Parents, too, exemplify our position, in the endurance, under the sustaining influence of love, of the wasteful extravagance of the child, who squanders by handfuls the hard earnings of their whole lives of toil, care, and economy; and who ministers hardly aught else but provocation, in courses of life known by him to be in direct opposition to the most sacred principles and the most cherished wishes of his parents. And not only does LOVE endure the hardships and provocations with long patience, but under them, and notwithstanding their existence, is *kind* toward those who have occasioned them. Kindness does not suppose indulgence to the wrongs of the beloved object, nor the withholding of any corrective of his faults—nay, it implies the contrary. But it does suppose a disposition to render any available service to the object beloved, even during the existence of those hardships and provocations which have proceeded from such object.

2. *Charity envieth not.* Envy is uneasiness at seeing those advantages which are valued by us possessed by others; espe-

cially if we are compelled to admit that they are possessed by those others in greater measure than by ourselves. Now, was it ever known that a husband, a wife, a father, a son, a friend, who loved the persons to whom they stood thus related, were rendered uneasy by the fact that the wife, the husband, the son, the father, the friend, were rich, endowed with personal beauty, intelligent, learned, or popular? Nay, did such ever repine at the *superior* wealth, beauty, intelligence, learning, or popularity of the loved ones? Was it not, rather, a matter of sincere gratification that those so dear were thus distinguished by the bounty of Providence?

3. *Charity vaunteth not itself.* To vaunt is to exult over others, on account of superior advantages enjoyed by us over them. This is the exhibition of vanity. No one who loved another, ever exulted over the loved one on account of any advantage, whether imaginary or real. Even the vainest coxcomb in existence, if by any chance he come to love aught save himself, will except from the humiliating comparison, which he is wont to make of others with himself, the object beloved. As, in the above particulars, it has been seen that charity and love are identical, so, if necessary, it might be shown in what follows; but we deem it needless.

4. *Charity is not puffed up.* To vaunt our advantages is in such bad taste, that many vain persons have too much good sense to allow themselves to be guilty of it; but they do without scruple indulge the feeling from which such vaunting proceeds. In the expressive language of the apostle, they are "puffed up;" swelled out beyond their proper dimensions; enlarged beyond their true measure. This tumefaction is, however, rather comparative than personal. They do not so much feel that their advantages confer upon them intrinsic importance, as that they enlarge their dimensions beyond the measure of their less fortunate, though, perhaps, really more meritorious neighbor. Charity is not thus affected by the advantages which adventitiously belong to its subject. It sees in the plain, the poor, the ignorant, the unknown to fame, a brother beloved; and, laying apart the consideration of these adventitious circumstances, appreciates the personal worth of the parties concerned. And, notwithstanding any of these advantages possessed by him, the man animated by charity may arrive at the just conclusion that his less fortunate neigh-

bor transcends him in worth even more than he exceeds him in the gifts of fortune. Or, if even worth be the subject of comparison, the charitable man who is conscious of superior worth is not "puffed up" or swelled out by even this excellence; for he remembers that he differs more, most probably, in the providential facilities and gracious helps by which he has been "led on and instructed," and by which he has been excited and sustained in his course of moral propriety, from his less virtuous neighbor, than he does in his moral attainments. At all events, there has been, within his consciousness, enough of neglect, of shortcoming, and of defalcation in his course to render his being "puffed up," on a comparison with others, too utterly preposterous to his own feelings and judgment to be indulged for even a single moment.

5. *Charity doth not behave itself unseemly.* In the intercourse where charity is the dominant influence, the fortunate do not behave themselves towards those less favored than themselves with haughty domination, with supercilious forbearance, or with contumelious kindness and patronizing assumption, but as standing on the even ground of common humanity; while the less fortunate do not behave themselves towards those more favored with crawling sycophancy or with defiant moroseness; but both, animated by the same principle, forget the difference in their circumstances, and meet as brethren, in cordial efforts to advance each other's happiness. Nothing could be more unseemly in man—absolutely dependent "for life, and breath, and all things," on the common Father of all mankind—than proud assumption on account of beauty, wealth, intelligence, or distinction; unless, perhaps, the equally proud, defiant, moroseness of those destitute of these advantages, towards those upon whom Providence has seen proper to confer them.

6. *Charity seeketh not her own.* By this we are not to understand that charity renders those who are animated by it indifferent to their own interest, or to that of those who are dependent on them. He that doth not "provide for his own, and specially for those of his own house, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," says the author of our text, in writing to Timothy; and he therefore could not mean that charity induces a dereliction of self-interest. But it does prevent that engrossing regard to self-interest which receives

and deserves the name of selfishness. It permits not those who are influenced by it to seek their own interest, to the exclusion of a generous concern for and earnest efforts to advance the interests of others; and much more does it prevent their seeking of self-interest at the expense of the interests and rights of others. While prudently attentive to what concerns their own well-being, the charitable will solicitously inquire how they may best promote that of their fellow-creatures, and will employ their most vigorous efforts to accomplish the plans for that purpose which their benevolence has prompted them to adopt. In the performance of this, they permit no desire of indulgence in ease, no allurements of sensual or imaginative pleasure, no natural repugnance to hardship, to inconvenience, or to the contempt or scorn of the world, to obstruct, or even to embarrass them. They seek their own only in common with the interests of those who are the objects of their charity.

7. *Charity is not easily provoked.* The purest, meekest, and most benevolent men—such is the perverseness of fallen human nature—are often so maltreated, so scorned by the proud, so deceived by the false-hearted, so maligned by the malicious, and so misrepresented by the slanderous, as to afford them abundant matter for provocation. Thus was Moses, the meekest of men, outraged by those to whom he had rendered invaluable services. Thus, too, was the Saviour, though “holy, harmless, and undefiled,” and though indefatigable in well-doing to mankind, despised, rejected, traduced, and crucified by those whom he came to bless and to save. Is it not enough, if “the servant be as his master?” We may, then, expect to meet provocation, even though entirely conscious of not deserving it. Charity is not affirmed to be exempt from the proper influence of these provocations. Moses was provoked. The Saviour looked upon his disingenuous adversaries “with anger.” Charity, however, preserves from a *facility* of taking offence. Not every thing that can be construed or surmised into an offence, is allowed to ruffle the temper of the charitable man; nor does he permit himself to be aroused by slight though real affronts, nor by a first offence, though of considerable magnitude. He is not “*easily* provoked.”

8. *Charity thinketh no evil.* The existence of evil in the

conduct of others may force itself upon the *knowledge* of the charitable man; but *suspicion* of its existence, where no evidence to that effect is presented to the mind, is not only not indulged, but, if it intrude itself or be obtruded upon the mind, is repelled, as a wrong done to the object towards which it is directed, and as an evil thought in the mind which harbors it. How much of the coldness, the malignity, and the discord of human society has its origin in groundless suspicion! A merely unconsidered omission, a look, a tone, or an entirely offenceless action, is often construed by those who are disposed to *think evil*, into an intended affront, and acted upon as such; and is made the basis of interminable quarrels and inveterate malice, or, at least, irreconcilable estrangement, between those who ought to be, and, but for this suspiciousness of disposition, would be, cordial friends. Charity allows of no such suspicion, but, on the contrary, admits with reluctant hesitation the clear evidence which compels a conviction to the prejudice of a fellow-creature.

9. *Charity rejoiceth not in iniquity.* When the conviction has forced itself upon the mind of the charitable man, that his neighbor—his rival or enemy, perhaps—has dishonored himself by some crooked, unjust, or degrading action, he receives no pleasure from such conviction. He cannot rejoice that his fellow-creature is infamous, even though his own virtue is thrown into bolder relief by the contrast thus presented to the public mind between his neighbor and himself, to his own advantage. Neither desire of gain, nor ambition of distinction, nor resentment for injuries received, can induce the charitable man to gloat with pleasure over the infamy of one for whom, in common with himself, the blessed Saviour purchased the privilege of attaining to eternal glory. But,

10. *Charity rejoiceth in the truth*—in the virtue, the integrity, the fidelity of every fellow-creature, whatever may be the relation in which such fellow-creature may stand to him in whom that godlike disposition is predominant. St. John declares that he has “no greater joy than to hear that” his “children,” or disciples, “walk in the truth;” and the charitable man will feel like joy at the upright, truthful walk of every man; for every man is the object of his charity, the brother of his heart’s warm affection.

11. *Charity beareth all things* annoying; because it is *not*

easily provoked—believeth and hopeth all things favorable, so far as possible; because it thinketh no evil, and is animated by kindness, and endureth all things that exercise patience and fortitude; because it suffereth long.

12. *Charity never faileth.* Circumstances may arise, in the life of every man, which will render of no value every other advantage he may possess: their use may be superseded by other and better advantages, or they may be rendered valueless by the incapacity of the individual who possesses them to derive benefit from their possession. The former supposition was true of the prophecies and tongues, which distinguished the early days of the Christian Church, and which were superseded by a more diffusive and equally effective agency, in the influence of the Holy Spirit upon the heart, enforcing the written revelations of the New Testament Scriptures. The latter supposition will be found often to hold good, in regard not only to knowledge, but to all that is esteemed good by man, excepting only charity. This regulator of our affections, this bond of society, this meetness for and foretaste of the purity and the bliss of heaven, will, in all circumstances, find proper scope for operation, and a capability, on the part of those whose bosoms are warmed by its influence, to profit by its presence. We may not amplify this point, and we need not. The characteristics of charity, already delineated, will render it sufficiently apparent. It remains,

III. To speak of the apostle's meaning, when he declares that though he did understand all mysteries and all knowledge, if he did not have charity, he should be nothing. The apostle could not have meant that, in the circumstances supposed, he should be nothing as it respected intellectual development, and the influence which enlarged capacity and great attainment insure to their possessor, among those with whom he is associated; nor could he have meant that he would be nothing, in regard to the admiration and applause of those to whom his extraordinary attainments and vast powers of mind should be known. In what respect, then, or in what respects would the apostle have deemed himself nothing, if, not having charity, he could boast unequalled mental excellence? Before answering this question, it may be well to remark that there is a kind of *reflective* charity in

the world, which, as far as it goes, has the effect to do away, so far as merely human judgment is concerned, the *nullity* of him who is without charity in fact. The courtesies, amenities, and benevolences which regard to public opinion often constrains the selfish themselves to practice, though springing from sheer pride or from motives of personal interest, go to the credit of charity, and influence the estimation in which the performer is held in accordance with this erroneous appreciation. We now proceed to show what we understand to be the apostle's meaning; and,

1. We suppose he means that, with the vast extent of understanding supposed in the text, he should, without charity, be nothing, IN SO FAR AS THE PROMOTION OF GOD'S GLORY IS CONCERNED. The glory of God, as the Creator of man, is best declared by the excellence of the creature he has made. His wisdom, his power, and his benevolence may by this means be rendered more strikingly apparent than by any simple description of those attributes which could be made to intelligent beings; and the glory of these attributes will be seen not alone in their individual manifestation, but chiefly as they harmonize in the production of some beneficial result. Now, though wisdom and power should be conceded to the creation of a highly intellectual being, destitute of moral worth, it is certain that benevolence and holiness would find no exhibition in such a creation; and, consequently, that God is not glorified by the most brilliant display of intellectual ability and resources, while charity is wanting to the direction of their operation and employment. Who would honor the mechanist who should produce the most complicated and noiselessly operating machinery, which could be applied to no useful purpose, but which, on the contrary, naturally tended to mischievous results, so far as its influence was permitted to operate? Who does not know that the brightest parts and the most affluent intellectual acquisitions do not manifest the glory of the Creator, when they are associated with impatience, unkindness, envy, boastfulness, haughtiness, unsuitable deportment, selfishness, a love of detraction, fretfulness, suspicion, and forebodings of iniquity, on the part of those upon whom even suspicion of existing wrong has not been able to fasten its poisonous fang? And yet the presence of at least some if not of all of this brood of vipers is argued by the

absence of charity. But is it important that man should show forth the glory of God? Who can question it, when it is well known that honor is claimed by the inventor, the author, the lawgiver, the teacher, and the parent, on account of what they deem valuable in what has been framed and fashioned by their skill, their care, and their effort; and that their claim is admitted, without hesitation, to the full extent of the worth found to exist in their several productions? And shall the principle not apply only in the case of Him who alone was disinterested in the performance of his work? Nay, can man boast a higher destination than that of showing forth the "praise of His glory?"

2. We suppose the apostle to have meant that without charity he would, though understanding all mysteries and all knowledge, be nothing AS A USEFUL MEMBER OF SOCIETY. Let it be recollected that, *so far as the influence we exert upon mankind is concerned*, reflective charity will, to some extent, produce the same effects as charity itself. These effects will most certainly be greatly inferior in amount and value to those which result from charity itself: still, a man with intellectual abilities may and will be useful to society in proportion as his conduct is in conformity to that which proceeds from charity. But suppose an individual possessed of the utmost intellectual abilities and attainments to act, in all things, in opposition to the law of charity—to be quick to take offence; cruel, or, at best, unfeeling, in his words and actions, towards those within the range of his influence; envious at the prosperous and the distinguished; boastful of his own advantages, or, at least, puffed up by them; haughty, if prosperous; querulous or insolent, if unfortunate; selfish; pleased to find causes of infamy in others; pettish; suspicious of evil where no evil is apparent, or anticipating such evil at a future period. We say, suppose this of any man, and CAN he be a useful member of society? The productions of his genius, the fruits of his knowledge, may benefit society to even a great extent; but will not the moral obliquities which he displays before that society more than counterbalance those benefits? Nay, is it not often seen that men of great talents are pestiferous to society, by the employment of those talents, and in proportion to the greatness of them? Who ever cursed society with such incalculable evils

as the great hero, whose military talents were not under the restraints of justice; the profound philosopher, whose moral views were perverted; or the splendid poet, whose imagination dressed up vice in a garb to fascinate and bewitch the unguarded heart? By these, and in proportion to the greatness of their several talents, has society been bathed in tears and blood, wrapped in flames or draped in mourning-weeds; has been sapped in its foundations and dislocated in its most important articulations; and has been poisoned in the fountains of its sentiments, its principles, and its enjoyments. So far from being useful members of society, men so gifted and so unprincipled must be reckoned among the greatest calamities which God has ever suffered to afflict mankind.

3. The apostle, we presume, may be understood as meaning that, without charity, no matter what his attainments in science, he would be nothing in point of PERSONAL RESPECTABILITY. It is true that such may enjoy the misjudging admiration and applause of their contemporaries, who look only or chiefly to the brilliance of their mental exhibitions; but when they dare bring themselves, or when they are brought by others to *any* established standard of respectability, they are found to be not merely wanting, but to deserve contempt, loathing, or abhorrence. In the loudest clamors of applause, a voice that will be heard tells them that

“All praise is foreign but of true desert—
Plays round the head, but comes not near the heart;
And more true joy Marcellus exiled feels,
Than Cæsar with a senate at his heels;”

that if the infatuated multitude could penetrate the brilliant haze in which they are enveloped, and see them in their true character, they would be the objects of hisses, instead of applause. And in this depreciating self-estimate the wise and good will fully concur. He who can be imposed upon by no exterior embellishments, who estimates men by the principles of the heart, has weighed them and pronounced them WANTING. Every award of value and weight is against their respectability. What right-minded intelligent being, whether in heaven or on earth, could look without pity, contempt, or abhorrence, upon a lofty intelligence fainting or fretting at every mischance; boasting or inflated on account of advan-

tages possessed, or envious of advantages enjoyed by others; regardless of the comfort of those upon whom he exerts an influence, but intensely selfish in all his plans and pursuits; rejoicing in the degradation of his fellow-men; suspicious of the apparently good, or expecting with pleasure their future abasement; without reliable principle, which may be calculated on in every future emergency? And such are those supposed in our text; and they must, therefore, be regarded as *nothing* in point of personal respectability.

4. We presume that the apostle means that the understanding of all mysteries and all knowledge, in the absence of charity, CANNOT CONFER HAPPINESS. This point scarcely needs argument or exemplification; as who does not know that enjoyment essentially depends, not on the capacity of the understanding or the stores which it has accumulated, but on the intrinsic character of the moral affections and habits, and on their harmonious adjustment? Who does not know that the fretful, cruel, proud, envious, selfish man has in his own bosom the elements of inappeasable strife, of irremediable discomfort? No one source of real enjoyment is open to such a one. He must despise the admiration that is lavished upon him by the misconceiving multitude, who estimate him without a knowledge of or a reference to his moral character. He knows himself worthy of no respect, and feels so well assured of God's disapprobation as to shut his eyes, as far he can, to the responsibility he owes to Him. The past records for him no deed of high-souled virtue, no instance of patiently borne affliction, no song of the comforted widow, no grateful tear of the protected orphan. He has lived to low, sordid selfishness, regarding others only as they have been ministrant to his advantage. In himself alone, therefore, must he look for the means of enjoyment; and these cannot exist in a bosom where patience, kindness, joy in the good of others, humility and self-sacrificing benevolence are strangers. And if such are nothing, as respects the ENJOYMENT OF HAPPINESS, in the present state of things, their condition can certainly be no more favorable in that state where every enjoyment must, in the nature of things, be purely moral and spiritual.

We now hasten to bring this already too long discourse to a close, by a brief but earnest exhortation, not to omit the most diligent efforts to acquire the most exact and most ex-

tended understanding of the mysteries and knowledge which challenge your investigation, but to add to this, what is so much more important, the possession of that charity which alone can secure your attainment to the great ends or destinations of your being—the glory of God, the utility of your existence to others, true respectability and happiness, in time and in eternity. Charity, like science, must, if ever possessed, be acquired by effort and by discipline. It is not native to the human heart, any more than is a knowledge of letters or of the laws of nature to the human mind. The Bible and its expositors are the teachers of whom we must learn the lessons of charity; and the discipline to which we must submit, and which will be effective, consists in repentance for past sins, self-denial, unblenching and avowed devotion to the will of God, and believing prayer, that, through the merits of the great atonement, the grace may be afforded and the Spirit imparted by whose influence and aid we may be wrought to that conformity to God in which CHARITY will direct all our affections, control all our passions, and impress her own heavenly image upon our whole character. Thus only may we secure this highest of all qualifications which can distinguish man—this richest treasure that man can possess.

You cannot begin this noble enterprise too soon; nor will your most diligent application to it retard in any degree your progress in any other laudable pursuit. Those charged with the education and direction of the human mind cannot too earnestly coöperate in this surpassingly important enterprise. Allow me, then, to urge you that, *before all, with all, and above all*, you “put on CHARITY, which is the bond of PERFECTNESS;” and then shall “the peace of God rule in your hearts.” Amen.

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